

Aquilegia

Magazine of the Colorado Native Plant Society
Volume 49 No. 1 Conference 2025





CNHP Wetland Ecologist Hanna Mohr training volunteers about wetland plants during the City of Louisville Bioblitz. © David Anderson

2025 Annual Conference

We look forward to seeing you in Denver in person or virtually at the Rare Plant Symposium (September 19) and the CoNPS Annual Conference (September 20–21)! Both will have presentations on several exciting state-wide projects happening in Colorado. These projects include the Statewide Natural Heritage Survey (SNHS), the 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), and the USFS Region 2 Native Plant Materials Program.

The **Statewide Natural Heritage Survey** started in 2024 and will continue through 2029. During this project, the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) will organize surveys of rare species and habitats, focusing on prioritized counties each year. CoNPS received a Colorado Parks and Wildlife “Partners in the Outdoors” grant to support CNHP’s efforts by engaging community scientists to help collect plant, animal, insect, and habitat data. The program is in its second year and has been highly successful. Data from the many conservation partners are used to build Colorado's Conservation Data Explorer (CODEX - <https://codex.cnhp.colostate.edu/>), a free and publicly available online tool for conservation data exploration and environmental review.

The **2025 Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan** now includes insects and rare plants. This plan will guide conservation efforts over the next ten years. The inclusion of rare plants in the SWAP provides a major tool for protecting these species and their habitats.

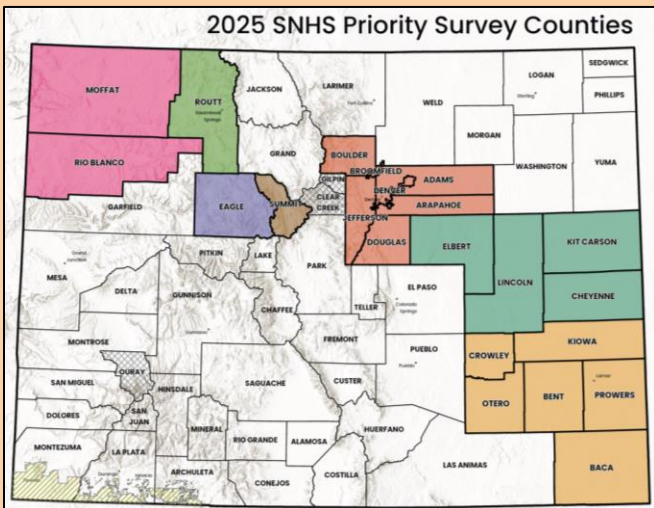
The **Region 2 Native Plant Materials Program** is a collaborative effort of the USFS, the Colorado Native Plant Society, and the Colorado Natural Heritage Program designed to collect native seed for restoration on Forest Service System Lands. Native plant material banks are critical in restoring lands after disturbances, creating long-term soil stability, enhancing wildlife habitats, and building resilient ecosystems. The program is in its second year and has been highly successful.

And **SAVE THE DATE!** The 50TH Annual Conference will be next year on May 23 in Grand Junction at Colorado Mesa University. The Plateau chapter's first two garden tours (2023, 2024) attracted hundreds of people. We look forward to sharing this success with our statewide community. KA

Links

<https://conps.org/home/events/event-listing/#!event/2025/9/20/conps-annual-conference-denver>
<https://cnhp.colostate.edu/ourwork/snhs/>
<https://codex.cnhp.colostate.edu/>
<https://engagecpw.org/state-wildlife-action-plan>
<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJzB1Phfy9--B5ALXRQU4JY4k3EF8wRRL&si=LGHEFfc10Nkrvajt>

Cover photo: *Philonotis fontana* (moss). © Barbara Thiers



Seed collection at CoNPS 2024 Annual Conference. © Maggie Gaddis

Aquilegia: Magazine of the Colorado Native Plant Society

Dedicated to furthering the knowledge, appreciation, and conservation of native plants and habitats of Colorado through education, stewardship, and advocacy

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AQUILEGIA: Magazine of the Colorado Native Plant Society

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Members usually receive four issues per year (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter). At times, issues may be combined. Articles from *Aquilegia* may be used by other native plant societies or non-profit groups if fully cited to the author and attributed to *Aquilegia*. All contributions are subject to editing for brevity, grammar, and consistency, with final approval of substantive changes by the author.

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Conference Agenda

Friday, September 19

8:00 AM – 4:00 PM: Rare Plant Symposium, Auraria Campus - St Cajetan's, 101 Lawrence Way, Denver

Saturday, September 20

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM: CoNPS Annual Conference, Turnhalle room in Tivoli, 900 Auraria Parkway, Denver

To register online, go to <https://conps.org/home/events/event-calendar/#!event/register/2025/9/20/conps-annual-conference-denver>

Time	Description	Speaker
8:00 AM	Attendee check-in/registration; on-site CoNPS Bookstore; Photo Contest viewing	
9:00 AM	Welcome and Introductions	Maggie Gaddis, CoNPS Executive Director
9:10 AM	Icebreaker	
9:20 AM	It's About Time! Seasonal Events are Shifting, with Tangible Consequences	Theresa Crimmins, USA National Phenology Network Director
10:10 AM	Bridging Tradition and Technology: Toward a Mobile Flora of Colorado	Jennifer Ackerfield, Colorado State University Assistant Professor
11:00 AM	Break	
11:15 AM	Using Observations on the Timing of Wildflowers to Learn about Climate Change	Paul Alaback, University of Montana Professor, retired
12:00 PM	Lunch	
1:00 PM	Lifetime Achievement Award	
1:15 PM	Fooling the Big Apes to Do Good: Progressive Landscape Design	Kenton Seth, garden designer
1:45 PM	Overview and Results from the USFS Region 2 Native Plant Materials Program	Curtis Drake and Blake Granquist, CNHP botanists
2:15 PM	Scholarships and Grants Committee	
2:30 PM	Break	
2:45 PM	Impact of Native Wildflowers on the Yield of Three Sisters Crops on Green Roofs	Izzy Rodelius, CSU masters student
3:15 PM	The Bryophyte Flora of Colorado Revisited	Barbara Thiers, Mo Ewing, and Stacey Anderson, bryophyte enthusiasts
4:00 PM	Evolution of a City Pollinator Garden	Janet Chu, biology teacher, retired
4:30 PM	Final Remarks	Maggie Gaddis

Sunday, September 21

Field trips

Several field trips are planned, most led by presenters from the Conference. See page 10 for details. Additional field trips may be scheduled. Stay tuned!

22ND Annual Colorado Rare Plant Symposium “Imperiled Plants Found in Central Colorado”

Friday, September 19

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

The Colorado Rare Plant Symposium is held each fall in conjunction with the Colorado Native Plant Society's Annual Conference. Hosted by the [Colorado Natural Heritage Program](#) (CNHP), the symposium is an annual meeting to address the status and conservation needs of rare plants in Colorado. The symposium will be held in the beautiful St. Cajetan's Center on the Auraria Campus in Denver. This year's symposium will include a photo review and discussion of selected rare plants of north central Colorado, as well as an update on the [2025 Colorado State Wildlife Action Plan](#). You can also expect updates from partners, presentations, and discussions on rare plant conservation status and research.

This is a day for practitioners, professionals, and interested citizens to learn all about rare native plants. This year, we are very excited to address the [Statewide Natural Heritage Survey](#), one of the statewide community science efforts. We will also learn about the new rare plant conservation efforts within Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW) which resulted from HB24-1117, 2024 legislation that gave CPW the authority to study and conserve rare plants and pollinators.

Presenters at this year's Symposium include Dave Anderson (CNHP), Jessica Smith (CNHP), Savanna Smith (CPW), Sarah Quadt (USFWS), Jay Ruebens

(USFWS), Carol Dawson (BLM), Phil Krening (BLM), Mit McGlaughlin (University of Northern Colorado), Michelle DePrenger-Levin (Denver Botanic Gardens, DBG), and My-Lan Le (DBG)

Past presentations and species-specific meeting notes are available on the [CNHP website](#) for 2004-2024.

We would love to see you in person or virtually! Please come for an opportunity to network with other rare plant enthusiasts and contribute to the conservation of Colorado's significant rare plant biodiversity.

[Registration](#) is available on the CoNPS events calendar. Updated details on the agenda, food options, and the potential to attend virtually will be provided at this link as available.

Please contact Jessica Smith at jp.smith@colostate.edu with any questions.

Links

<https://cnhp.colostate.edu/>

<https://engagecpw.org/state-wildlife-action-plan>

<https://cnhp.colostate.edu/ourwork/snhs/>

<https://cnhp.colostate.edu/projects/colorado-rare-plant-symposia/>

<https://conps.org/home/events/event-calendar/#!event/2025/9/19/colorado-natural-heritage-program-rare-plant-symposium>. 🌐



A few rare plants found in central Colorado. From left to right: *Aquilegia saximontana* (Rocky Mountain columbine, © Delia Malone), *Physaria alpina* (Avery Peak twinpod, © Scott Smith), and *Townsendia rothrockii* (Rothrock Townsend-daisy, © Peggy Lyon). Courtesy of Colorado Natural Heritage Program.

49TH Annual CoNPS Conference “Native Plants in Our Changing World”

We are so pleased to come to Denver this year to explore the conference theme “Native Plants in Our Changing World,” convening at Turnhalle in the historic Tivoli building on the Auraria Campus in downtown Denver. We welcome Dr. Jennifer Ackerfield, author of *Flora of Colorado*, and Dr. Therese Crimmins, Executive Director of the National Phenology Network, to headline our event. Other speakers will address varied topics in horticulture, research, and community science. All our speakers

are Colorado Native Plant Society members and thought leaders in their respective fields. From crevice gardens to butterflies and bryophytes, our speakers will address many topics that describe our shared Colorado landscape and the people in it that make it such a great place to live.

To register, go to <https://conps.org/home/events/event-calendar/#!event/register/2025/9/20/conps-annual-conference-denver>

Saturday Speakers and Presentations



Theresa Crimmins

It's about Time! Seasonal Events are Shifting, with Tangible Consequences

Phenology is all about timing—when trees leaf out, flowers bloom, birds migrate, animals bear young and hibernate—and it is everywhere around us. Seasonal events quietly but steadily occur

in response to fluctuations in daylength, temperatures, and rainfall patterns, and these events are threaded through our daily lives, shaping our experiences and perceptions. As such, the timing of seasonal activity is being affected by rapidly changing climate conditions, with significant ecological and economic impacts. In this presentation, Crimmins will share a summary of what is known about how phenology is changing and why this matters. She'll also share practical information about how you can participate in documenting the timing of seasonal life cycle events—both for your own benefit and for the good of the environment.

Dr. Theresa Crimmins is an internationally recognized phenology researcher, director of the USA National Phenology Network, and associate professor in the School of Natural Resources and the Environment at the University of Arizona. In her role with the Network, Theresa supports an amazing team and works enthusiastically to support the growth and use of phenology data and resources curated by the USA-NPN, involvement in Nature's Notebook, and a broader appreciation of phenology among scientists and non-scientists alike. She has published over 70 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. Her writing has

appeared in Scientific American, The Hill, the Old Farmer's Almanac, and Nautilus Magazine. She shared her thoughts about the importance of observing phenology in a TEDx talk (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=310fMlv2-5Q>) in October 2024 and her book, Phenology, was published through MIT Press in early 2025.



Jennifer Ackerfield

Bridging Tradition and Technology: Toward a Mobile Flora of Colorado

The *Flora of Colorado* is the authoritative reference for over 3,000 plant species found across the state's diverse landscapes, from

shortgrass prairie to alpine tundra. While indispensable for researchers, land managers, and amateur botanists, the current print edition is large, heavy, and impractical to carry in the field. Advances in mobile technology now offer a compelling solution. Unlike traditional dichotomous keys, modern plant ID apps can use easily observed traits such as growth form, flower color, locality, and elevation to quickly narrow down possible species. This talk explores the potential for transforming the *Flora of Colorado* into an interactive app, modeled after the successful FloraQuest platform developed for the southeastern United States. By leveraging this existing framework, we can create a dynamic, user-friendly tool that makes Colorado's flora more accessible to a wider audience, including students, land stewards, and ►

◀ naturalists. However, one critical question remains: how do we fund such a project? Development and licensing costs will require creative collaboration and sustained support. Ultimately, an app version of the *Flora of Colorado* would not only modernize plant identification but also broaden engagement with the rich botanical diversity of Colorado.

Dr. Jennifer Ackerfield is the director of the Charles Maurer Herbarium and assistant professor of Botany at Colorado State University. There, she teaches Plant Identification, Plant Systematics, and co-teaches Dendrology and Herbaceous Plants. She also coordinates and directs the growth and improvement of the herbarium and manages students and volunteers working with the collections. Throughout her career, Jennifer has traveled extensively throughout Colorado documenting its rich floristic diversity. This knowledge led her to write the Flora of Colorado, with the goal of helping anyone identify the plants of Colorado with ease and confidence. She also leads a research program focused on documentation of biodiversity through targeted floristic inventories, systematics and taxonomy of western North American groups such as native thistles (Cirsium) and unraveling the origins of plant diversity in the Southern Rocky Mountains through biogeographic studies. Jennifer regularly collaborates with organizations and agencies across the state, leads field trips and workshops, and initiates community participatory science campaigns. She loves teaching and sharing her passion for botany with students of all ages.

Dr. Paul Alaback has been studying the ecology and conservation of temperate forests and associated landscapes for over 30 years. He is the author of numerous technical publications and two books on temperate rainforests. He also is the author of several regional plant field guides including one devoted to the plants of Larimer County. Paul received his PhD at Oregon State University, specializing in forest ecology and botany. He also was one of the scientists who helped found Project Budburst, a national community science program. He was a professor of forest ecology and wilderness ecology at the University of Montana for 20 years. He actively promotes public participation in science and natural history education here in Colorado.



Kenton Seth

Fooling the Big Apes to Do Good: Progressive Landscape Design

How depressing is it when a native-plant heavy landscape is shot down as an idea or disliked when it happens? Seth will discuss the approach of appealing to human desires as a means to maximize adoption of

more sustainable and supportive landscape and garden design. Let us consider tools to make such designs more palatable on the front end, and, importantly, maintainable on the back end so they fulfill their mission.

Kenton Seth is a native-biased garden designer based in Fruita, Colorado, who does end-to-end work creating progressive landscapes and gardens that honor place and the other species on earth. He is author of The Crevice Garden, Filbert Press, 2022.

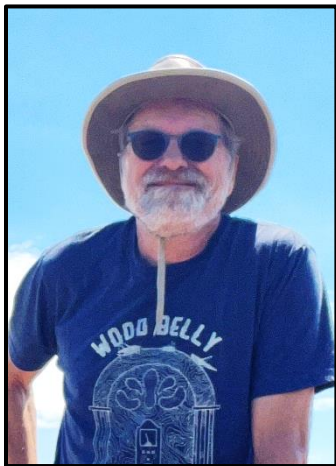


Izzy Rodelius

Impact of Native Wildflowers on the Yield of Three Sisters Crops on Green Roofs

Urban areas are expanding throughout the world, increasing infrastructure and impermeable surfaces and concurrently decreasing

quantity and quality of natural landscapes. With a decrease in green spaces, human communities experience an increase in food scarcity. Ecological communities experience a decrease in biodiversity and suitable habitat. Here, we aim to utilize native ►



Paul Alaback

Using Observations on the Timing of Wildflowers to Learn about Climate Change

It is well known that many plants in temperate or cold climates change their timing or phenology in response to climate. Studies of phenology are particularly important today since they can help

us better understand how climate change is unfolding across the country. Not all species are changing their phenology at the same rate. This can lead to mismatches such as between the timing of pollinators and flowers, and migratory birds with their food sources. By making simple observations of plant phenology in your garden, in a local natural area, or along a local trail, Colorado Native Plant Society members can make important contributions to this important field of study. Here, Alaback will illustrate how to do this by looking at a new study initiated by the Boulder Chapter to compare modern phenology of wildflowers with that measured over 20 years ago in a local natural area.

◀ wildflowers, vegetable crops, and urban infrastructure to provide healthy food as well as biodiversity options to urban areas. In this study, we examine (a) how the presence of native perennial Colorado wildflowers may influence the yield of crop plants, specifically the three sister's guild of maize, beans and squash, plus sunchokes and sunflowers and (b) how the crop yields may differ between sites in full sun and partial shade landscapes. To do so, we utilize green roofs and ground plots at Colorado State University in Fort Collins to evaluate the yield differences. We hypothesize that the crops with wildflowers nearby will produce a higher crop yield than the crops grown without wildflowers. Additionally, we expect that shade treatments will reduce yield compared to the full sun treatments. Thus far, preliminary data analysis suggests that crops grown on the green roof with native wildflowers nearby had a higher average leaf number (as a proxy for the size of the plant). The yield of the squash crop was the highest on the green roof with the native wildflowers while the yield of the pole bean crop was highest at grade with native wildflowers nearby. This shows that the proximity to wildflowers may have a significant effect and there may be an effect of shade for the yield of pole beans. With this research, we hope to provide notable insight to continue working towards the most efficient crop growth on green roofs in urban environments.

Izzy Rodelius is a masters student at CSU studying the impacts of wildflowers on crop yield and pollinator populations on green roofs. She is passionate about creating food security and creating pollinator habitats in urban areas. Izzy envisions a future where green spaces in cities can provide a bounty of resources for humans and critters!



Janet Chu Evolution of a City Pollinator Garden

Jan is one of a dozen helpers who created the pollinator garden at Frasier Meadows Retirement Community in Boulder. One special feature is the water retention pond. In the beginning, it was nearly filled with sterile arctic willows and Canada

thistles. Now it is vibrant habitat for pollinators and birds. Hand labor is provided by resident 80–95-year-olds. Frasier Meadows has been supportive, providing drip lines and heavy equipment to pull stumps.

Jan Chu is a retired Biology teacher of 39 years in the Boulder Valley School District. She has volunteered in the Boulder Valley Open Spaces inventorying butterflies. Jan and Steven Jones co-authored a successful field guide, Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range, a photographic guide to 100 butterflies. Since moving into the retirement apartments at Frasier Meadows about 5 years ago, she has helped the many residents develop a mostly-natives pollinator garden.



Curtis Drake and Blake Granquist Overview and Results from the USFS Region 2 Native Plant Materials Program

Drake and Granquist will present an overview of the Region 2 Native Plant Materials Program of the USFS, detailing how the US Forest Service, the Colorado Native Plant Society, and the Colorado Natural Heritage Program collaborate to collect native seed for restoration on Forest Service System Lands, and what has been accomplished so far.



Curtis Drake is a botanist at the Colorado Natural Heritage Program. Since joining CNHP in 2024, his main project has been the

Native Plant Materials Program. Curtis has a BS and MS in Wildlife and Wildlands Conservation (botany emphasis) from Brigham Young University - Provo. His research experience includes seed coating technology, dormant season livestock grazing, statistical modeling of ecosystems, and biodiversity assessment methodology.

Blake Granquist is a botanist working alongside Curtis Drake for the Native Plant Materials Program with CNHP. His interest in plants began at a young age when he began identifying the plants alongside the trails he hiked in Jefferson County. After several years of familiarizing himself with the regional flora of his home, he began his personal efforts in native plant cultivation. Blake's passion for plants would eventually bring him to the Warner College of Natural Resources at CSU where he would pursue coursework in ecological restoration, GIS, and natural resources. He has worked summers as a botany technician for various CSU institutions, allowing him to focus on his passion and skills pertaining to botany and the flora of the Southern Rocky Mountains region. ►



◀ **Barbara Thiers, Mo Ewing, and Stacey Anderson**

The Bryophyte Flora of Colorado Revisited

By present reckoning, there are 807 species of bryophytes reported from Colorado, documented through approximately 36,000 herbarium specimens. The earliest specimens date from 19th century geological and railway surveys, but study of the bryophytes of the state did not begin in earnest until the arrival of William Weber as a professor of Botany at the University of Colorado in the late 1940s. Weber and associates, such as Frederick Hermann and Ronald Wittmann, collected throughout Colorado, but most extensively in the Front Range, especially in Rocky Mountain National Park and adjoining areas. The only comprehensive publication on the bryophytes of Colorado is that of Weber and Wittmann, *Bryophytes of Colorado (Mosses, Liverworts, and Hornworts)* published in 2007.

The work so ably begun by Hermann, Weber, and Wittmann is now being revisited by a group of retired bryophyte enthusiasts. Together with colleagues of similar interest from New Mexico and Arizona, the speakers have created an informal association whose objective is to increase knowledge and appreciation of the bryophytes of the southwestern US among students, lifelong learners, and individuals and groups charged with studying and protecting the environment. Members of the group meet annually for field excursions, help each other with identifications, and share knowledge with beginner bryologists through monthly online meetings. For Colorado specifically, the group plans to share products such as checklists, distribution maps and keys that will be freely available through the CONPS website. Also, in collaboration with the Colorado Natural Heritage Program, the Colorado members of the group are helping to update the current list of rare bryophytes and to document the location of these species.

Barbara Thiers retired as Director of the New York Botanical Garden in 2021 and moved to Colorado shortly thereafter. She is a Research Associate at the Denver Botanic Gardens.

Mo Ewing is a retired conservation biologist whose last position was Land Stewardship Director at Colorado Open Lands, a statewide Colorado land trust. Mo's primary interest at present is the mosses of Colorado and New England.

While struggling to learn about bryophytes, Stacey Anderson set out to make learning about mosses accessible to anyone. She held "garage labs" in her home and "Virtual Moss Labs" (VML) online with others she recruited. She started, along with the VML community, "Bryophyte Beginnings" a monthly meeting of presentations, discussions, and connections concerning anything bryophyte related.



Maggie Gaddis

Growing Native Plants for Restoration Outcomes

Following several years of research investigating dryland revegetation in recreational trail closures in the Garden of the Gods, horticultural soil media

effects on native plant growth, and germination rates for common Colorado native plants, CoNPS Horticulture Committee members prepare to take the next step. This research aligns well with the Jefferson County Open Space (JCOS) 2025 Research Objectives to investigate native plant survival and success. In an effort to increase native plant applications in wildland and horticultural settings, the committee developed a multi-year investigation using JCOS-collected native seed to propagate four forbs and four grass species in a crossed design. We grew the eight native species in three soil types (native, commercial potting soil, and roadbase plus municipal compost), with and without fertilization. We propagated the plant material in a greenhouse, then planted it at a restoration site on North Table Mountain. With the help of community scientists, we are measuring the survival and growth of these plants *in situ*. In this talk, preliminary results will be shared. We anticipate the results of this study will increase native plant success in JCOS restoration efforts and decrease the costs of both plant and soil resources required for restoration and horticultural efforts.

Dr. Maggie Gaddis is the executive director of the Colorado Native Plant Society. Maggie is a restoration ecologist and botany educator. She originally started volunteering for CoNPS as the Southeast chapter chair because she needed more botanists to participate in her citizen science-based research in the Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs. CoNPS members and students from all over the Front Range came down to help her collect data and that is when she knew that her people were in CoNPS. Maggie was hired as the first Executive Director of CoNPS in 2021. ☺

Sunday Field Trips

Sunday, September 21

Please consider joining your fellow members on one of the trips exploring the natural habitats around Denver. Our trip leaders have put together a diverse range of possible field trips this year. Registration links will be available soon. Details on where to meet for each field trip will be provided at the conference.

Late Season Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range

Leader: Janet Chu
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM



The rabbitbrush near the Walden parking lot, when in full bloom, attracts many late season migrant butterflies. The most exciting is the Western Pygmy Blue, the smallest butterfly in North America—smaller than a honeybee.

Jan Chu is the coauthor with Stephen Jones of Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range. She has studied and led hikes in Boulder County for 40 years. She will have many stories to share about butterfly habitat requirements and life processes. This will be a short walk and is available to handicapped naturalists.

Bryophyte Hike

Leaders: Stacey Anderson, Mo Ewing, and Barbara Thiers
9:00 AM – NOON



Bryophytes (mosses and related plants) are often overlooked but beautiful and ecologically critical elements of Colorado's mountain landscapes. We will introduce you to some of the common and easily recognized species and to the habitats they prefer. We will also talk about opportunities for further

bryophyte study, for those of who are as captivated by these amazing little plants as we are. If you are into macro photography, bryophytes are an excellent subject!

What to bring: Hand lens and other hiking essentials, such as water, hiking boots, sunscreen, insect spray, snacks. The trail is described as gentle and well maintained.

Barbara Thiers retired as Director of the New York Botanical Garden in 2021 and moved to Colorado shortly thereafter. She is a Research Associate at the Denver Botanic Gardens.

Mo Ewing is a retired conservation biologist whose last position was Land Stewardship Director at Colorado Open Lands, a statewide Colorado land trust. Mo's primary interest at present is the mosses of Colorado and New England.

Stacey Anderson set out to make learning about mosses accessible to anyone. She has held "garage labs" in her home and "Virtual Moss Labs" (VML) online with others she recruited. She started, along with the VML community, "Bryophyte Beginnings" a monthly meeting of presentations, discussions, and connections concerning anything bryophyte related.

Denver Botanic Gardens Herbarium Tour

Leader: Molly Nepokroeff
9:00 – 10:30 AM



Enjoy a tour of the natural history collections and the Kathryn Kalmbach Herbarium. There will be time to explore the Gardens and art exhibits on your own afterwards.

Gardens admission included in tour.

What to bring: The tour will take place indoors, but if you want to explore the Gardens outdoors afterwards, wear comfortable shoes, sunscreen, hat, etc. Lunch is available for purchase at Offshoots Café or The Hive.

Molly Nepokroeff is the Head Curator of Natural History Collections at Denver Botanic Gardens.

Jefferson County Open Space Plant Growth Study Field Visit and Ecological Monitoring Training

Leader: Alannah Burrill
9:00 AM – NOON



Come visit our plant growth study on North Table Mountain in Jefferson County. We will describe the project and teach you how to collect plant survival and growth data. The site is ►

◀ approximately 10 minutes from the trailhead. This is an easy, flat walk on trail surfaces.

Learn more about this [CoNPS research project](#) funded by the Jefferson County Open Space Small Research Grants program.

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1b3YaVdQhMT5N27i-3hH3vTMoe5gp2yxuHmpKGkNo0C0/edit?usp=sharing>

What to bring: Hand lens and other hiking essentials, such as water, hiking boots, sunscreen, snacks.

Alannah Burrill is a plant enthusiast and emerging restoration ecologist with a deep love for Colorado's native flora and wild landscapes. She is a CoNPS research assistant supporting the Jefferson County Open Space Native Plant Growth Study. She also led a reintroduction project in her hometown of Charleston, SC for the federally endangered wetland plant Canby's Dropwort. Alannah is passionate about community science and making ecological research accessible to all.

National Phenological Network Phenology Hike

Leader: Theresa Crimmins

8:00 – 10:00 AM



Learn the basics of documenting plant and animal phenology using [Nature's Notebook](#), the USA National Phenology Network's

observation system. The location will be someplace close to the conference center. We will not walk far; we will be focused on looking at plants and animals and discussing how to record what we see using the [Nature's Notebook](#) app. <https://www.usanpn.org/nn>

What to bring: Hand lens, clipboard and/or your smartphone, and other outdoor essentials, such as water, hiking boots, sunscreen, snacks.

Dr. Theresa Crimmins is the director of the USA National Phenology Network. Nature's Notebook was developed by NPN as an important tool in documenting phenology. Her book, Phenology, was published through MIT Press early this year.

Statewide Natural Heritage Survey Field Monitoring Hike

Leader: Jess Cheadle

8:00 AM – NOON

Learn about the Statewide Natural Heritage Survey with the Colorado Natural Heritage Program's Jess Cheadle. We will go hunting for a rare *Carex* sp. (sedge) on Green Mountain. Our efforts will update



the Colorado Data Explorer (CODEX), a comprehensive database of Colorado's biota. We will use iNaturalist to record our data.

What to bring: Hand lens, clipboard and/or your smartphone, and other outdoor essentials: water, hiking boots, sunscreen, snacks.

Learn more about the [Statewide Natural Heritage Survey](#).

<https://cnhp.colostate.edu/ourwork/snhs/snhs-engagement/>

Jess Cheadle is trained as a botanist and wetland ecologist. She is the Program and Volunteer Coordinator with Colorado Natural Heritage Program. She coordinates the volunteers and bioblitzes participating in the Statewide Natural Heritage Survey. Jess received her Bachelor of Art in Pre-Professional Zoology from Ohio Wesleyan University. I received my Master of Conservation Biology from the University of Queensland in Australia.

Roof Top Garden Tour at CSU Spur

Leader: Maria Schonewise

10:30 AM – 1:30 PM



Come learn about native plants and pollinators blooming and buzzing on the green roofs at the CSU Spur Campus in Denver!

This tour will focus on sown meadow research and will discuss rooftop agrivoltaics and bioretention research being conducted in the Busselot Lab. The flowering research

meadows were sown as a mix of 34 species of mostly Colorado native wildflowers, shrubs, and grasses in collaboration with the horticulture research team at the Denver Botanic Gardens. Ultimately, we are investigating how to curate sown vegetation on green roofs to minimize input while providing high-quality habitat and floral resources for pollinators. You will learn about the process of creating these meadows and hear about preliminary findings from this season's research!

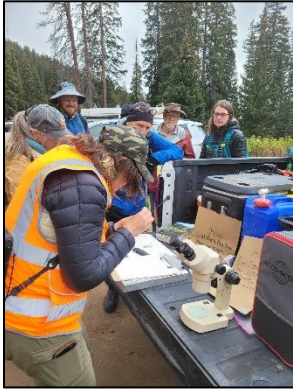
Maria Schonewise is a master's student in the Graduate Degree Program in Ecology at Colorado State University. Her graduate research focuses on sown vegetation on green roofs, aiming to create high-quality habitat and resources for urban pollinators. Her previous research involved studying invertebrate pollinator diversity on ▶

◀ *Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in the Colorado Rocky Mountains as a field biologist in the Research and Conservation department at the Butterfly Pavilion.*

Wildflower Identification Training

Leader: Maggie Gaddis

9:00 AM – NOON



Learn how to key out native plants. Come experience how we teach CoNPS members to increase their botanical skills through a deductive and mentored approach to plant identification. In this workshop, we will learn how to take photographs that help key out plants and become research grade data for applications like the Rocky

Mountain Native Plant Materials Program and the Statewide Natural Heritage Survey. After observing plants, we will sit down with our plant specimens, the *Flora of Colorado* (Ackerfield, 2nd Ed.), hand lenses, and microscopes to learn how to use a dichotomous key.

Download the [iNaturalist app](https://www.inaturalist.org/) before attending.
<https://www.inaturalist.org/>

What to bring: Water, hand lens, notebook, pencil, camera, sunscreen, snacks.

Dr. Maggie Gaddis is a restoration ecologist and botany educator and is the executive director of the Colorado Native Plant Society. When CoNPS members and students from the Front Range helped her collect data in her citizen science-based research in the Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs, she knew that her people were in CoNPS.

Native Plant Art Workshop

Leaders: Lee Lee Leonard and Claire Coté

1:00 – 4:00 PM



Explore new ways to appreciate plants through artistic expression. We will make leaf prints, shadow drawings, and cyanoprints.

Born and raised in Denver, Lee Lee works at intersections of arts, ecology, and social justice to cultivate community

centered acts of habitat restoration. She will be presenting “Storied Landscapes: Cultivating urban corridors with the African diaspora in the Ghetto Leanne in Port-Au-Prince & Five Points in Denver” as part of the panel on Cross-Cultural Collaborative Restoration, led by Dr. Andrew Knight, at the SER 2025 conference. Lee Lee helped design the gardens at the Stiles African American Heritage Center, whose mission is to teach African American history as a means of helping all people to understand the present. You can tour the Heritage Gardens which incorporate plants and ecosystems used on the Underground Railroad, as ingredients in Madam C.J. Walker's hair care products, and by many other Black pioneers, scientists, and entrepreneurs.

<https://stilesaahc.org/>



Claire Coté is a multi-passionate artist, mother, off-grid homemaker and founder/director of LEAP (Land, Experience & Art of Place). Springing from the natural and cultural ecology of the Northern New Mexico high desert, Claire's interdisciplinary and experiment-driven practice includes drawing, painting, cyanotype, sound, interactive sculpture, story-collection

and community collaboration. Photo © Daniela Garza, Duri Productions

Pike National Forest Seed Collection

Leader: Mele Avery

Monday, September 22, 8:00 AM – 12:30 PM

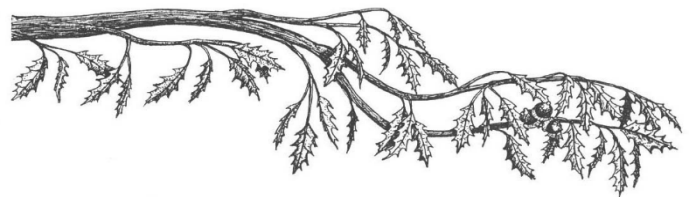


Please join us on the Monday after the CoNPS Conference for a seed collection event to support the USDA Rocky Mountain Region Native Plant Materials Program. Come collect native seeds for the restoration of National Forests and Grasslands across the Rocky Mountain region! Seeds we collect go to the USFS for

post-fire restoration, wildlife habitat, and ensuring resilient ecosystems. Join us for this seed collection after the Conference, north of Deckers, details TBD.

Register here! <https://conps.org/home/events/event-calendar/#!event/2025/9/21/seed-collection-pike-national-forest>

Mele Avery is a librarian and former IT worker who now helps coordinate CoNPS seed collections for the USFS. She's been an on-call Librarian with the Denver Botanic Gardens library since 2017.



Additional Conference Information

Annual Photo Contest Call for Entries

Share your spectacular photos of native plants and scenery in our Annual Photo Contest! Your favorite photos from any year are eligible. You may submit one photo in each of five categories, listed below.

1. Colorado Native **Plants**
2. Colorado Native Plant **Landscapes**
3. Native Plant **Gardens**
4. Colorado Native **Plants and Wildlife**
5. **Artistic** interpretation of Colorado Native Plants. Artists are welcome! A photo of a fine art painting, an altered photograph, or collage are also acceptable. The artwork must contain at least one recognizable Colorado native plant.

Entries must be a single work of original material submitted by the contest entrant. Entries **MUST** include the scientific name of the primary plant species in the photo, at least to genus level, and preferably to species level. Include your last name and photo category in the file name. Please submit photos by September 10. Contest is open to all CoNPS members. For full details, see <https://app.viralsweep.com/contest/full/f46f8b-139696?framed=1>



Voting will take place online September 12-18, and the winners will be announced at the annual conference. Winning photographs will be featured in *Aquilegia*, on the website, and in other CoNPS publications.

Volunteers Needed for the Annual Conference

We will need volunteers for a variety of jobs at the conference. Please contact Maggie Gaddis at coloradonativeplantsociety@gmail.com

We also need reporters and photographers to prepare summaries of the conference presentations and to report on conference field trips. Please contact Kelly Ambler at alpineflowerchild@gmail.com

Call for Poster Presentations

We are thrilled to announce that we will have easels to showcase posters this year! This is your chance to share your knowledge, discoveries, and experiences with the native plant community. Poster presentations may be on any native plant-related topic. Posters should be self-standing for display on easels. They will be available for viewing throughout the day on Saturday.

Let's Minimize Waste at the Conference!

The Conference Planning Committee is committed to minimizing waste from the food and beverages served at the conference. Auraria Campus will provide tableware for lunch. We hope that all participants will bring their own cups for coffee and other drinks during the breaks. Water will be available to refill your water bottles. Thank you, everyone!

Opportunity to Sponsor the Colorado Native Plant Society 49th Annual Conference

\$500 Title Sponsor: Three conference registrations, three CoNPS memberships for one year, all the acknowledgements below, plus an organizational statement provided in the conference presentation slides and in the *Aquilegia* issue summarizing the Conference.

\$300 Ambassador: Two conference registrations, two CoNPS memberships for one year, all the acknowledgements below, plus your logo in the Executive Director's email signature, and on the homepage of the CoNPS.org website for one year.

\$200 Contributor: one conference registration, one CoNPS membership for one year, plus your name/logo in the Conference media, and acknowledgement in ALL of the *Aquilegia* magazines for one year.

\$100 Friend: one conference registration, plus your name in the *Aquilegia* issue summarizing the Conference.

\$100 Partner Booth: one conference registration, plus a booth/table at the Rare Plant Symposium on Friday and/or the Conference on Saturday.

<https://conps.org/home/events/event-calendar/#!event/register/2025/9/20/sponsor-the-conps-annual-conference>

Denver Maps

AURARIA
CAMPUS

www.aurariacampus.edu

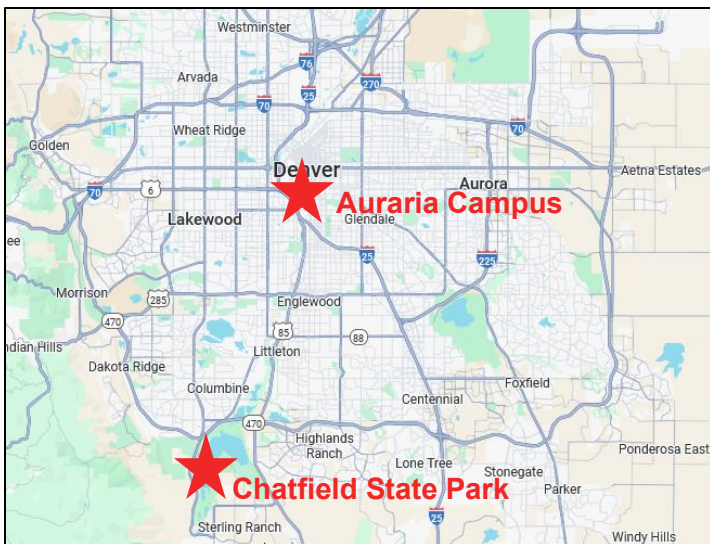
Night & Weekend Parking Rates for Unregistered Vehicles

Rates:

Tivoli Garage: \$25
All Other Auraria Campus Parking Lots and Garages: \$20

Hours:

Monday-Thursday: after 5 p.m.
Friday-Sunday: all day



Transportation and Lodging

Transportation and Parking

Carpooling and the use of public transportation is highly encouraged.

Parking: Parking is available at any paid lot on campus. Vouchers for parking will be provided. Due to the St. Jude's 5K fundraising race on Saturday, we suggest you use the 7th Street Garage (located at Lawrence Way and 7th Street). The voucher number can be used again on the same day if it is necessary to leave the campus, then return.

Light rail: Several light rail lines stop on the Auraria campus. These include the D line to Littleton, E line to Lone Tree, the H line to Aurora, and the W line to Golden. For maps and detailed information go to <https://www.rtd-denver.com/routes-services/rail>

Other transportation options in the area can be found at <https://www.denver.org/about-denver/transportation/>

Lodging

We have an offer from The Curtis downtown, near the Performing Arts Center. Use [this link](#) or mention "Colorado Native Plant Society" when booking rooms. Note: an independent search may turn up better rates. <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/denchedt-90m-cea9f695-4985-4332-ab97-62af3b90c916/>

Camping

Want to camp? We reserved a group campground at Chatfield State Park which will accommodate 40 people. Come join us! This is a great way to extend your networking and social engagement. Also, lots of people last year said they always wanted to go camping but don't want to go alone. Here's your chance to hang with your flower friends.

Additional camping options can be found by searching Google for "camping near Denver". 🌀

World Conference on Ecological Restoration

The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER)'s World Conference is an exciting and inspiring biennial gathering of global experts in ecological restoration, making it the premier venue for those interested in being active members of the global restoration community. The 11TH World Conference (SER2025) itself will be held September 29 – October 4 in **Denver**. In addition, several field trips and training courses will be held prior to the conference.

September 30 – October 4
The 11th World Conference on Ecological Restoration
Denver, CO
<https://ser2025.org/>

Each day of the conference, keynote speakers will cover topics including marine coral restoration, grassland conservation and species recovery, watershed restoration through large-scale dam removal, Indigenous-led restoration and cultural healing, coastal wetland restoration for biodiversity and climate benefits, and collaborative governance models between Indigenous nations and conservation agencies.

Daily plenary sessions will focus on the theme "**From Commitment to Action.**" Three of the four plenaries will link to the three ecosystems, terrestrial, coastal and marine, and inland waters, as featured in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) restoration target. The fourth plenary will feature a high level panel that will explore the enabling conditions for accelerating restoration.

September 27 – 30

Field trips

<https://ser2025.org/field-trips/>

September 28 – 29

Conference training courses

<https://ser2025.org/training-courses/>

CoNPS was awarded a Torrey Botanic Society Symposium Award to support a training course at SER2025. The course will share a community science species identification training platform and teach attendees how to key out known native plants used in restoration contexts.

September 30

Make a Difference Day

<https://ser2025.org/make-a-difference-day/>

Make a Difference Day offers delegates the opportunity to participate in hands-on restoration activities, choosing between Deer Creek Canyon Park or Daniels Park.

October 2

SER2025 Film Festival

<https://ser2025.org/film-festival/>

The 2025 Film Festival received 118 total submissions over four categories, with representation from 35 countries. Eight films will be featured at the SER2025 Film Festival on October 2. Finalists will be announced that night with the winners announced at the end of the festival. 🌀

Blast from the Past

Editor's note: The 24TH CoNPS Annual Conference was held in Grand Junction, the site of next year's 50TH Annual Conference. Let this report inspire you to attend next year's

conference in May! We moved our Annual Conference to the spring so we can have a 50TH Anniversary Celebration in the fall. Mark your calendars!

2000 Annual Conference Report

Mesa State College in Grand Junction was the site for this [2000] year's Annual Meeting hosted by the Plateau Chapter. The program was entitled "Natural History and Plant Ecology of the Colorado Plateau." Life-long CoNPS memberships were awarded to Rick Brune, and Loraine and Dick Yeatts, while Denise Culver was recognized for her considerable service as Treasurer. A plaque memorializing Myrna P. Steinkamp, who passed away in 2000, was given to Sue Martin, her co-chair on the Membership Committee. Rick Brune somehow managed the book sale without Velma Richards, the sound system worked, and it even rained at times other than lunch and breaks!

And what great speakers and presentations there were! Dr. Bruce Bauerle (Mesa State) initiated the meeting with ideas on "how to set the hook" and interest others in plants. Noting that plant extinctions are increasing, he called upon us, as CoNPS members, to remain "stalwart keepers of native plants in Colorado."

Loraine Yeatts next put on an INCREDIBLE slide show covering the plants and plant communities of the Colorado Plateau. Members saw some of the Colorado Plateau endemics and learned of their adaptations to the dry, desert conditions. There was definitely magic in this slide show, which was even accompanied by music! We were very lucky this year to have Dr. James Reveal (Professor Emeritus, University of Maryland) talk to us about the genus *Eriogonum* (buckwheat) and the rapid evolution of this genus within the Polygonaceae on the Colorado Plateau. Our next presentation was by Dr. Don Sullivan (University of Denver), who has been conducting research on long term climatic changes in Colorado. By examining sediment core samples obtained from Colorado fens, Dr. Sullivan has determined that the Mesa Lake fen is 23,000 years old and, as such, is the oldest fen discovered so far in the state! He also reported that Grand Mesa was deglaciated 5,000 years earlier than any other area in Colorado. Dr. Susan Meyer (USDA Forest Service Shrub Science Laboratory) next discussed the distribution, adaptations, and pollination and seed dispersal strategies of the unusual blackbrush (*Coleogyne ramosissima*, Rosaceae). The relationship between native plants on the Colorado Plateau with cryptobiotic soil crusts was discussed by Dr. Jayne Belnap (United State Geological Survey). Dr. Belnap informed us that soil crusts occupy up to 70% of the interspaces between native plants on the Plateau.

These crusts, which are comprised of cyanobacteria, lichens, and mosses, are the "glue holding the Colorado Plateau in place." With regard to the vegetation of the plateau, soil crusts play two major roles—fixing nitrogen and stabilizing soils for the establishment of native plants. Non-natives, specifically cheatgrass, are seldom seen in areas with good soil crust establishment. Furthermore, recovery of soil crusts after disturbance can take up to 100 years, recovery increasing with intensity of disturbance. Our final speaker was Joel Tuhy (The Nature Conservancy), who illustrated some of the rare plants of the Colorado Plateau, including the Cisco milkvetch (*Astragalus sabulosus*, Fabaceae; Utah), canyonlands biscuitroot (*Aletes latilobus* [*Lomatium latilobum*], Apiaceae), and the alcove rock daisy (*Perityle specuicola*, Asteraceae; Utah). The threats to these species were also discussed.

Rick Brune and Velma Richards (Sales Committee) reported that books, t-shirts, and other merchandise were again popular with attendees at the Annual Meeting. Sales exceeded \$4,700, nearly matching the sales of the 1999 annual meeting. Although book sales dropped by about 30%, the sales of shirts and totebags made up the difference. The drop in book sales may be due to the lack of new members, something that is inevitable without new membership. In response, the Committee has dropped about 25 old titles from their list and added about 25 new ones, which may help sales. Interestingly, there were no clear cut favorite titles or best sellers as in previous years.

Sunday went just as well, with three successful field trips. Not even snow stopped a determined group from accompanying Dr. Sullivan to fens on the Grand Mesa. Peggy Lyon led a group to the Colorado National Monument, where they saw the unusual canyonlands biscuitroot in sandstone seeps. The group was also treated to two four o'clocks, *Mirabilis glandulosa* and *M. multiflora* (Nyctaginaceae), both in full bloom! The third group enjoyed a tour of Chelsea Native Plant Nursery near Clifton. The owner, Stacey Stecher, and her husband collect seed from many native species in the area resorting to other regional sources, as necessary.

All in all, it was a great weekend! Many thanks go to Jeanne Wenger, Bob Clarke, and other Western Slope members!

Aquilegia (2001) 25.1-2:1-2. ☞

CoNPS Grants and Scholarships

The Colorado Native Plant Society funds grants and scholarships to support our mission of furthering the knowledge, appreciation, and conservation of native plants and habitats of Colorado through education, stewardship, and advocacy. <https://conps.org/conps-grants/>

The **Marr Grant** honors **Dr. John W. Marr**, University of Colorado professor and first president of CoNPS. Grants of up to \$1,000 are awarded for field or laboratory research that advances knowledge on the biology of Colorado's native plants and contributes to their conservation. Grants are awarded annually with a February 15 application deadline.

The **Martin-Steinkamp Grant** honors Drs. Myrna P. Steinkamp, who was another founding member of CoNPS. Her years of work on behalf of the Society included helping with both editions of the Society's publication, *Rare Plants of Colorado*. Grants of up to \$1,000 support work on Colorado native plants that are rare or of conservation concern, and are awarded annually with a February 15 application deadline.

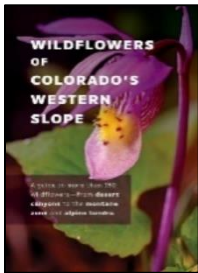
The **Mission Grant** supports the development of educational materials, programs, projects, or events to inform people about Colorado native plants. Mission grants may also be awarded for native plant research that does not overlap with work funded by Marr and Steinkamp grants. Grants of up to \$1,000 are given twice annually; application deadlines are August 1 and February 1.

The **Alice Eastwood Scholarship** supports undergraduates pursuing bachelor's degrees that ultimately advance the mission of the Colorado Native Plant Society. **Alice Eastwood** was a pioneering Canadian American botanist who wrote and published the first book on flora in central Colorado, *A Popular Flora of Denver, Colorado*, in 1893. One or two scholarships are administered each fall, with successful applicants receiving awards of \$950 or \$475; the latter was Eastwood's annual salary earned while teaching at Denver East High School in the late 1800s. 🌀

CoNPS Bookstore

The CoNPS Bookstore will be at the annual conference! Need to update your library? Here are a few options. <https://conps.org/home/conps-store/#!form/StorePlantBooks>

distribution maps, habitat information, flowering times, and elevation ranges for all species.

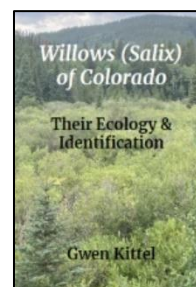
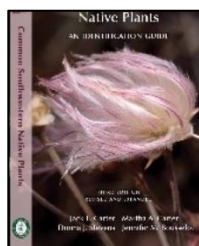


Wildflowers of Colorado's Western Slope by Jim Pisarowicz and Mary Menz

This colorful pictorial guide provides identification of more than 350 wildflowers from semi-desert shrublands to the high alpine Rockies and points between.

Common Southwestern Native Plants: An Identification Guide, 3rd Edition by Jack L. Carter, Martha A. Carter, Donna J. Stevens, and Jennifer M. Boussetot

Combining scientific information and lyrical expression, the authors bring together 128 woody plants and 64 herbaceous flowering plants common to the Southwest.

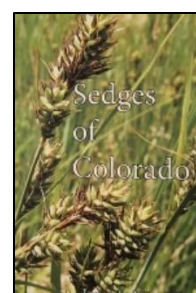
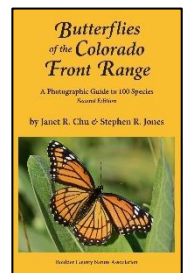


Willows (Salix) of Colorado by Gwen Kittel

This work covers all aspects of Colorado willows and how to identify them in any season. Includes discussion of willow ecology and where to find them in the landscape.

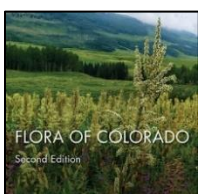
Butterflies of the Colorado Front Range, 2nd ed. by Janet R. Chu and Stephen R. Jones

This book focuses on 100 frequently seen species in the Colorado Front Range. Each species account includes photos and a brief description.



Sedges of Colorado by Janet Wingate

This publication features illustrated keys to *Carex* species, detailed descriptions, illustrations, and distribution maps. *Carex* morphology is explained and illustrated.



Flora of Colorado, 2nd ed. by Jennifer Ackerfield

This book is a comprehensive guide to the over 3,300 vascular plants in Colorado, and contains descriptions,

CoNPS Membership

Dedicated to furthering the knowledge, appreciation, and conservation of native plants and habitats of Colorado through education, stewardship, and advocacy

Why Become a CoNPS Member?

<https://conps.org/join-conps/#join>

The Colorado Native Plant Society is a member-run organization. Our membership drives our activities, including the production of our magazine, *Aquilegia*.

CoNPS Committees

<https://conps.org/committees/>

Please join one of our committees to help further our mission: Conservation, Education & Outreach, Field Studies, Media, Restoration, Grants & Scholarships. Joining a committee allows you to keep informed about CoNPS projects.

CoNPS Chapters

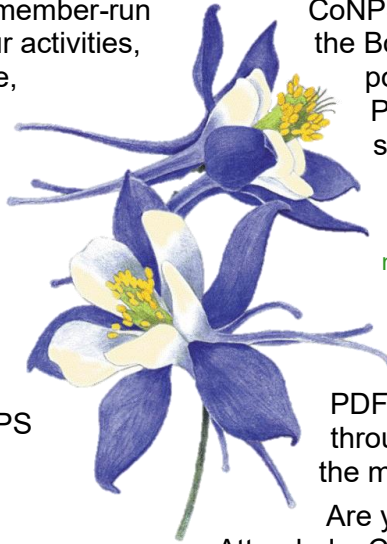
<https://conps.org/chapters/>

CoNPS chapters are geographically based. Chapter programs are open to all members. Join the chapter nearest to you! Arkansas Valley, Boulder, Gunnison Basin, Metro-Denver, Northern, Plateau, San Luis Valley, Southeast, Southwest.

CoNPS Board of Directors

<https://conps.org/board/>

CoNPS is seeking to fill several positions on the Board of Directors. Some of these positions include chairing committees. Please let us know if you are interested in shaping the future of CoNPS!



Aquilegia Magazine

<https://conps.org/home/aquilegia-2/aquilegia-magazines/>

Aquilegia is the magazine of the Colorado Native Plant Society. It is emailed to all active members as a PDF document and is available online through the website. Print subscriptions of the magazine are available.

Are you a writer? A photographer? An editor? Attended a CoNPS-sponsored event recently? Join the *Aquilegia* team! We are always seeking interesting articles, book reviews, and other stories.

Donate to CoNPS

<https://conps.org/donate-to-conps/>

Interested in supporting CoNPS? See our donation page!

Thank You to our 2024 Annual Conference Sponsors!



Can You Identify These Prairie Plants?



Answers (clockwise from upper left): *Dalea purpurea* (purple prairie clover; Fabaceae), *Mentzelia nuda* (white blazing star; Loasaceae), *Ipomoea leptophylla* (bush morning glory; Convolvulaceae), *Ratibida columnifera* (prairie coneflower; Asteraceae), *Lygodesmia juncea* (rush skeletonplant; Asteraceae), and *Abronia fragrans* (fragrant sand-verbena; Nyctaginaceae). © Kelly Ambler

Colorado Native Plant Society



1536 Wynkoop St. Ste 911
Denver, CO 80202
<http://www.conps.org>

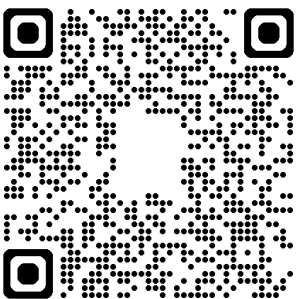
SAVE THE DATE!

The 50TH CoNPS
Annual Conference
will be May 23, 2026 at
Colorado Mesa University
in Grand Junction

22ND Rare Plant Symposium, September 19
*Imperiled Plants
Found in Central Colorado*

and

49TH Annual CoNPS Conference, September 20–21
Native Plants in Our Changing World



<https://conps.org/home/events/event-listing/#!event/2025/9/19/colorado-natural-heritage-program-rare-plant-symposium>

<https://conps.org/home/events/event-listing/#!event/2025/9/20/conps-annual-conference-denver>